SURVEY UPDATE

by Lynn Rudow

I am most pleased with those of you who took the time to answer *and* return the survey sheet. We had a very good response. While I haven't had a chance to put all the results in this issue, I did want to let you know some of the top level information.

The majority of users have Vector Graphic equipment. CP/M came in first for operating systems, MDOS second, and a few also run MS-DOS.

More of us write our own programs as opposed to buying. The most popular language to write in was BASIC. I was also surprised to see that those who write their own programs also write in other languages, such as PASCAL, ASM, and FORTRAN. A couple of brains even program in MACHINE.

The most popular wordprocessor was MEMORITE, with WORDSTAR second (no wonder I don't get any response from my Spellbinder articles!). dBASE-II/III is the most popular database manager, however there was a very wide variety of other database programs used. MODEM7, CROSSTALK, and CONNECT were the most popular communications programs.

Almost all of us use our computers for both business and pleasure. The majority of us are thinking about going to MS-DOS. Some have already.

What I thought was kind of a surprising statistic is that the average age of a Muggie is 50.89 year. Hey you guys, what's with this "over 39", "50+" stuff, I thought it was only women who lied about their age. *Just to show you how nice I am,* I'm 37 years old. Boy, do we have a lot of years experience!

Next month we'll give some **real** statistics on the survey. We'll also give some samples answers to questions like "What should a users group provide?", "What kinds of articles would you like to see in the newsletter?", etc.

For some of you, if you don't renew your subscription, you'll miss getting the August issue. Check your label and see if it's time for you to renew. If your label reads 0786, it's time to renew.

Tune in next month for the BIG results.

MAILPLUS

Al Brandli (3176 Pullman, Suite 103, Costa Messa CA 92626 - Phone: (714) 754-6363) informed us of his sale on the MAILPLUS program. Al is selling the $199 program for $99.

MAILPLUS is an enhancement to the original Vector Graphic mailing list programs. The enhancement is accomplished by replacing and adding modules provided by Sourceware Associates to the existing mailing list program code. The addition of MAILPLUS will make manipulating and searching through your mailing lists much easier. The addition of several different search types as well as a translate feature which allows moving names, addresses, etc. from an established mailing list to a list with a different format are the primary features of MAILPLUS. Also offered by MAILPLUS is a scan feature which will allow the user to scan backward or forward through the members of a mailing list after starting at any point in that list.

The end user of MAILPLUS must already have purchased the Vector Graphic mailing list program, the MAILPLUS diskette DOES NOT contain the original mailing list program.

Listed below are the descriptions of enhancements to each of the mailing list modules.

1. Create or delete a mailing list

There have been no enhancements to this module.

2. Edit or display members of a mailing list

This module now includes: add members; change information about a member; display members; scan through members; delete members and reactivate members. All of these with the exception of scan and add members are capable of the seek and select methods described below.

3. Print a mailing list or mailing labels

There have been no enhancements to this module.

4. Select members from or sort a mailing list

This module now allows sorting by up to four fields and use of the seek and select methods described below.

5. Match and update/translate

With this new module the computer will search through a mailing list, pull out only the described records and change information in any of the fields in that record. This can be done automatically or with the users approval of each record.

Also, the translate portion allows the transfer of selected fields from a mailing list with one format to a new mailing list with a completely different format. This translate feature can also be used to combine several lists into one by specifying all the fields. This allows users to deal with only one mailing list instead of several.

Description of search types.

Four types of searches are utilized in the MAILPLUS enhanced version of the Vector Graphic mailing list program. They are:

1.	Fred Smith Fargo, ND 58102	2.	Fred Johnson Mott, ND 55411
3.	John Doe Hoople, ND 55823	4.	Smith & Wesson Zap, ND 56223
5.	The Smithsonian Washington, DC 11234	6.	Duane's Pizza Farbo, ND 58102
7.	Goodyear Tire Fargo, ND 581O2	8.	Sourceware Associates Fargo, ND 58102

1. Identical twin search - a search which selects members who match exactly with the users input. Example: Specifying 'John Doe' on Line 1 would result in only member number 3 matching.

2. The southpaw search - a search which selects members when only the beginning of the members information is known to the user. Example: Specifying 'Fred*' on Line 1 would result in member numbers 1 and 2 matching.

3. The keyhole search - a search which selects members with information that matches the input value anywhere on the line. Example: specifying 'son*' on Line 1 would result in members 2, 4 and 5 matching.

4. The 'one eyed jacks are wild!' search - a search which selects members by seeking out all but certain characters or numbers in the members information. Example: Specifying '581?2' on Line 3 would result in members 1, 6, 7 and 8 matching. (Note that the O in member number 7 is the letter o, not a zero, and it still matched.)

LEARNING ABOUT SDP MAILMERGE

By *Lynn Rudow*

I thought you might find it interesting, how a novice learns to use Spellbinder Desktop Publisher. I wanted to send out brochures on SDP and Scientific Spellbinder using the mailmerge macro. Since I didn't know immediately how to do this, I "looked-in-the-book". Again, I am very impressed with the Spellbinder Manual. My first job was to set up a file of addresses I wanted to mail to. This file looked like this:

Mr. Rudow
Carl B. Rudow
DAMAN
604 Springwood Circle
Huntsville
AL
35803-1740
205 881-1697
<

The '<' at the top represents a sort field - I didn't particularly want to decide what fields I wanted to sort on, but Spellbinder recommends that you put a RETURN just in case you want to sort later. The '<' at the bottom was to mark who responded to my mailout. I had a total of 10 fields, which is the max SDP will allow you to use. Each field is referenced in the letter as a number, such as, @1, @2, etc. Okay, I have my mailing list typed in and have saved it as SDPLIST. My next job was to do the letter.

The letter was typed and at a specific location I would insert a reference to one of the fields from the mail list, such as:

```
June 18, 1986

@3
@4
@5
@6, @7 @8

Dear @2,

Since many progressive companies in @6 are
beginning to do their own publishing, I would
like to introduce @4 to the latest in Desktop
Publishing.  Etc., etc.
```

I saved this out as SDPLTR. Now it was time to merge the two and see if it was as easy as it had been so far. Keep in mind, both my list and the letter were generated under what I consider regular Spellbinder - no special macro program to run.

I'm still in regular Spellbinder - COMMAND mode and type "AD". Spellbinder then asks for the macro file name which is "mmerge". Spellbinder pulls in the mailmerge macro and there's a nice little menu for me to select from - *I liked this!!* It asked for the name of my mail list, then asked for the name of my letter. Spellbinder then merges my mail list and letter together and sends the final product to the printer (or to the screen or disk).

Another question is the option of printing one letter at a time or print the entire batch. At first I just printed one - make sure it was going to do it right. My fears satisfied, I now changed to print the entire batch,

walked out of the room and had a cup of coffee. The final product was personalized and I was ready to send out my brochures.

For reference, the letter came out looking like:

June 18, 1986

Carl B. Rudow
DAMAN
604 Springwood Circle
Huntsville, AL 35803-1740

Dear Mr. Rudow,

Since many progressive companies in Huntsville are beginning to do their own publishing, I would like to introduce DAMAN to the latest in Desktop Publishing. Etc. etc..

I could also have generated labels using the same mail list, but that's another story. Anyway, it was my **first** time *ever* to use this particular feature and I was very pleased at how simple it really was.

Next month I'll tell you about my THREE lessons with Buzz on how to use the "Enhance/Special Character mode - *what an adventure!*

LETTERS

A Response to the "New Look"

Buzz: Your article on your "new look" and "new interest" really hit home.

I've never been sorry I got the Vector System B, almost half a decade ago, in preference to the Apple II, which was the only competition at the time. In today's dollars, the cost of that 64K machine would buy a machine with over 500K of memory, a 20 MB hard disk, a laser printer and more software than I could ever use.

But what did I get? A word processor -- my chief application -- which still outperforms (speed, ease of learning, features) most of the word processors I check out on current systems. No pesky little problems (dropped characters, flaws requiring an ongoing series of so-called updates, no copy protection).

And all of this with remarkably little trouble. When I read about the horrors of newer systems in *InfoWorld*, I can only wonder how users can accept it. Vector even answered their phone when I called them. I've only had to periodically have Dave Land maintain the disk drives -- and that at reasonable cost.

And what battleship-like durability! My incredibly heavy System B box (I can hardly lift it any more, it must be gaining weight) sits on my desk, on top of which I have the Vector 5 MB hard disk, which runs continually. One day, the heating pipe in my office broke and I started pulling furniture and file cabinets out of the way -- forgetting that one of the cabinets supported the desk on which the Vector equipment sat.

The whole collection of apparatus, VDT, hard disk, and system box, slid off of the tipped desk and hit the deck; the hard drive took a corner blow. The power was on throughout. I was back in operation in ten minutes, since all I had to do was to reinitialize one half of the hard disk. Even its distinctive chirp (I now know that hard disk chirping is endemic) was unchanged. Try that with your AT.

But like you, Buzz, I'm coming the the end of my dedication to the Vector. Why? Largely because I can no longer effectively communicate with the rest of the world; there is a de facto standard, and I'm outside of it. The university is an IBM shop and I cannot trade data disks or carry my work back and forth between my home office and the university facilities. When my students give me data on disks, I can't do anything with them unless I stand in line at the university's limited XT facilities. I can't even check submissions from quality engineers who use my home-study quality control course because we have tied it to a quality control software package running only on IBM compatibles.

I no longer share the problems of people who come to me for advice. The detailed knowledge I should have of their operations, I am no longer getting from the Vector, which not only is not IBM, it is from another land -- a world that time had passed by.

And while my Vector does word processing well by any standard, the LUCID spreadsheet in my SUPER RAM (Portable Computer Support Group) in my Radio Shack Model 100s outperforms Execuplan and is much easier to use. The WRITE program in the same RAM is easier to use for correspondence or short items (I'm using it for this). And, as you have observed, there are things that can be done today which we can't do on the Vector.

An era is passing. We all have our personal choices to make. You got your IBM and laser printer, and I will have to go somewhere similar, soon. Many of your readers must be in the same position. Will there always be a place for the MUG Newsletter? And if there are users who for one reason or another (like me) get something out of reading it, will YOU want to do it anymore? I wait to hear the results of your survey.

Herbert F. Spirer, Professor of Information Management, The School of Business Administration, The University of Connecticut, Scofieldtown Road, Stamford, CT. 06903.

LETTERS (Continued)

Herb- 'Always' is a long time. For the short term, I'd surely say there's a place for the MUG. As you'll see next month's continuation of the Survey article, Lynn has received many reasons why the MUG is useful.

I don't know whether its an ego trip, a touch of good samaritanism, or what, but Lynn and I have no current intentions of stopping the newsletter.

Help for S-100 & Micropolis/Vector Graphic

To Members of the Micropolis/Vector Graphic Users Group:

Well, after "going straight" for three and a half years, I have once again succumed to the siren's song of independence and am back in business full time as an independent computer consultant.

Goodbye staff of 30-40 engineers and programmers. Sometimes I'll miss the help. At other times, I'll enjoy not having the hassle of having all those people reporting to me. Sometimes I'll miss all the cushy company benefits. At other times I'll enjoy not having all those things deducted from my larger (albeit at times irregular) paycheck.

At any rate, there seems to be plenty of need for people to tame the technological developments of the last several years, and that is the business I am in. What does an "independent computer consultant do?" Well, this one does just about anything involving bits, bytes, and bucks.

Taming OSM

At present, I am working on a multi-location wholesale/retail inventory control and accounting system. This is a software job, involving some business sense and a lot of horse sense in the design, some coding skill, and a lot of patience and imagination to get the customer trained and converted to the new system without disrupting his business.

I'm writing the system in Micropolis' OSM BASIC, which my customer has been using quite happily for several years. Although this system never achieved the popularity of CP/M, MS-DOS, or even Micropolis' original (floppy disk) MDOS, I believe that it is still the most powerful and responsive microcomputer-based file server on the market.

Where else can you get a 7.5 megabit per second data transfer rate from the hard disk, a keyfile maintenance system implemented in hardware, and 34 millisecond average access time, all in a system capable of simultaneously supporting sixteen devices and four to sixteen tasks? When used for inquiry, the system can retrieve inventory data from three different files by stock number almost before you can get your finger off the "return key."

The mainframe is a Vector System B, but the secret to the speed is the three other processors provided with the OSM system between the Vector's Z80 and the hard disk.

This will be the second major wholesaling system I have done under OSM. By the way, if you are an OSM user and need some field-proven general-purpose data management programs or need some custom work done in OSM BASIC or assembly language, give me a call. I have recently developed an assembly language utility called SUBMIT for OSM, which offers some of the same batch-mode facilities offered by CP/M's SUBMIT, but in the multi-user OSM environment. It's quite handy for doing unattended overnight runs.

How Come Nobody Ever Heard of "A" and "B"?

Now, just so you don't think I am so gung-ho Micropolis that I can't appreciate the IBM PC, I must tell you that I am also working on an industrial/scientific application with DATASMITH on the PC. And just so you don't think I'm locked into BASIC, I'll tell you that this application is written entirely in "C".

This will be my first commercial application written in this language. As far as complexity and level of effort are concerned, I think that "C" and assembly language have a lot in common. But there is where the similarity ends, because "C" is portable (if used properly) from one processor to another, and from one operating system to another. This means you can write programs on your Z80-based machine today and run them on an MS-DOS based PC or a UNIX-based minicomputer tomorrow! (Typical computer industry promise - you know it can't be quite that easy!).

To help keep the effort required to a manageable level, "C" makes development and use of "libraries" easy so you don't have to keep writing the same routine over and over again - and so you can use someone else's routines when appropriate. Are you concerned that some day you will be converting from your Vector/Micropolis system to a PC with MS-DOS? Then consider using Microsoft BASIC5 (for high-level problems) and BDS-C (instead of assembly language) to make the conversion simple.

By the way, if you have tried to use BDS C on your Vector Graphic system (like I did), you will probably be interested in my utility program which gives you the "or" symbols (|, ||) you need to write programs in this language from your Vector Graphics terminal. Unfortunately, the only Vector Graphic package which produces this symbol (that I know of) is Memorite: the standard Vector-supplied BIOS will not provide the

LETTERS (Continued)

7C code with any combination of keys on your Mindless Terminal.

Life is Hard(ware)

But you all know me for my disk drive repair service. Will I continue doing that? Well, drives handle bytes and repairs bring in bucks, so the answer in YES, this activity fits within the scope of the "independent computer consultant" as defined above. By the way, I can also take on an occasional S-100 printed circuit board for repair, too. You'll have to call me to see if the board you have is economical to repair: some boards are not, and I'll be happy to identify these for you (business is good, and I have plenty of work to do without these boards) - and to suggest alternatives if your board is not economically reqaired. I have schematics, parts, and repair information on many of the Vector Graphics, Godbout (Compupro), and a smattering of other brands of boards.

I also do custom hardware design in either the S-100 or IBM PC environment. One of my other current jobs is the design of a CD-ROM interface for the IBM PC for a high-volume manufacturer (I have plenty of experience with high-volume electronics manufacturing, too).

An Ill-Disguised Advertisement

So in summary, I am now (still?) in the business of putting small computers to work. I can take on a large variety of hardware or software jobs either myself, or in conjunction with my associates as a project manager. In addition to my well-known regular number, I now have a 24-hour answering service which may be reached directly on 383-7464 if you have trouble getting through to me on my regular line. As the new enterprise develops, we'll be taking additional steps to maintain the prompt and responsive service you have come to expect from me.

David A. Land, 10020 Fontana, Overland Park, Kansas 66207 - (913) 648-1373

Accounting Plus

Buzz: I have been working with Herman Lanninga (Business Computer Solutions, 1301 Fraser, Ste. A11, Bellingham, WA 98226, 206/671-8611) to get information concerning Accounting Plus to his Vector Graphic users. The effort seems to be going well and I would like you to consider making the same information available to your Users Group. We understand the all too frequent problems encountered by users of the more non-standard computers and are determined to provide reliable solutions for Vector users.

We have been using Accounting Plus internally for some time now, as well as supporting numerous installations, and are convinced of its reliability and potential as an accounting solution for retail, wholesale, and general business applications. We will provide names of satisfied Vector Graphic/Accounting Plus users upon request.

Accounting Plus has been on the market now for several years and currently runs under CP/M, CP/M-86, MS-DOS, and PC-DOS. We believe in its potential and are committed to its continued growth through excellence in product development and support. With the current and ongoing enhancements provided by MicroPlus, and our own support program, we are confident that Accounting Plus will again be among the best (and best selling) accounting systems for microcomputers.

We understand the needs and concerns of dealers and users, and working with MicroPlus we have initiated what we believe to be among the best service and support anywhere. In addition to intensive sales/technical training and support programs and a variety of documentation to assist dealers and users, we provide unlimited telephone support at no charge to our dealers to insure they get the answers they need when they need them. Users without local support are given the same professional care and consideration and are provided with information about reliable Accounting Plus dealers in their area.

Detailed specifications are made available in the form of source code and a programmers reference guide. The programmers reference manual provides information on creating job streams that can be executed by basic programs, a machine language interface to a balanced-tree file manager, setting up batch processes within a basic program, interfacing with the file manager, the sort utility, General Disk I/O Routines, and file layouts/definitions.

Richard L. Wright, Business Computer Solutions, 1301 Fraser St, Suite A11, Bellingham, WA 98226, (206) 671-8611.

Richard- I'm most happy to include your letter. As you've pointed out, we non-standard computer owners have our problems. I'll include information on Accounting Plus in future newsletters, derived from the material you inclosed. Meanwhile, I'm sure members will contact you directly, if they have immediate needs.

CLASSIFIED

The Classified Section of the MUG Newsletter is available to all users, free of charge. Just call or write us with a description of what hardware, software, information, etc., that you want to obtain, or dispose of.

FOR SALE - Memberships in Vector Graphic Users' Group/Midwest.

Our focus is on the CP/M and CP/M-86 Vector systems used in a business environment -- we leave the Micropolis systems to the experts (Buzz & Lynn).

We have about 80 members, some of whom even get together once a month in Minnesota's Twin Cities area. Other members in OK, MS, MO, IL, WI, and ND seem to join us to receive our modest newsletter.

Interested parties can receive the current newsletter for $1.00, or can send $12.00 for calendar 1986 dues (includes back issues for 1986). We hope to expand the contents in the future, which may also cause a modest price increase.

Contact: Vector Graphic Users' Group/Midwest, c/o Roger Groth, coordinator, 8429 Little Road, Bloomington MN 55437-1301. Phone (612) 835-7312.

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WANTED - To get in touch with other Magic Wand wordprocessor users. Perhaps we could benefit from communicating back and forth.

Joyce Davis, 14233 Lost Meadow, Houston TX 77079. Phone (713) 589-7062.

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FOR SALE - Vector Graphic SX 5000, 5010E, and 4-20 computers. Also NEC dot matrix printer.
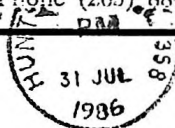
Lou Pretts, (904) 432-0617.

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CONTINUED FOR SALE - All items in the Brandli Inventory Clearance Sale shown in the June MUG newsletter - **PLUS** - take an extra 10% discount if you are a MUG member. Offer good through August 31.

Al Brandli and Associates, 3176 Pullman Street, Suite 103, Costa Mesa CA 92626. Phone (714) 754-6363.

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WANTED - Manuals for the following two boards: Seattle Computer Products SCP 400B MULTIPORT 4-port serial board; Solid State Music 2 serial/4 parallel I/O board. Will pay for any reproduction and shipping expenses.

Buzz Rudow, 604 Springwood Circle, Huntsville AL 35803. Phone (205) 881-1697.

MICROPOLIS/VECTOR GRAPHIC
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